

Message Text

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ACTION EA-13

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FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4969

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 4727

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, KS

SUBJECT: CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS AND ROK AMBASSADOR

REF: STATE 157803

1. KOREAN AMBASSADOR TO U.S., HAHM PYONG CHOON HAS BEEN INSTRUCTED TO RETURN IMMEDIATELY TO WASHINGTON AS A RESULT OF THE NIX-FRASER SUBCOMMITTEE HEARINGS. THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE CRITICISM IN THE UNITED STATES OF RECENT ROKG ACTIONS AND THE CONSEQUENCES IN CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS HAS CLEARLY REACHED HIGHEST LEVELS IN ROKG. HAHM TOLD ME ABOUT A LONG MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT, PRIME MINISTER, FOREIGN MINISTER AND OTHERS WHICH LED TO HIS ORDERS TO RETURN AND DO WHAT HE COULD TO IMPROVE THE SITUATION.

2. HAHM ASKED IF IT WERE POSSIBLE TO GET THE HEARINGS POSTPONED OR CANCELLED. I TOLD HIM I DID NOT BELIEVE THIS WOULD BE POSSIBLE. THEY CERTAINLY WOULD NOT BE CANCELLED AND I DOUBTED THEY WOULD BE POSTPONED GIVEN THE CONGRESSIONAL CALENDAR. HE SPOKE OF SEEKING ASSISTANCE FROM QUOTE FRIENDS IN CONGRESS UNQUOTE TO MEET THE CHALLENGE. I TOLD HIM HE COULD EXPECT A STRONG CONDEMNATION OF RECENT ROKG ACTIONS UNDER THE EMERGENCY MEASURES AND THE TRIALS STEMMING THEREFROM, CONFIDENTIAL

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WITH PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON THE SEVERE SENTENCES HANDED

DOWN. HE SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THIS AND HAD BEEN TRYING DURING HIS STAY IN SEOUL TO PREACH MODERATION WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT. HE HAS HAD LITTLE SUCCESS AND NOTED A HARD MOOD AT THE TOP. NEVERTHELESS HE FOUND FAINT HOPE IN THE STATEMENT BY PRESIDENT PARK THAT HE UNDERSTOOD THE NEED TO BE QUOTE FLEXIBLE UNQUOTE. HAHM WAS NOT SURE WHAT THAT MEANT.

3. I TOLD HAHM THE DEPARTMENT COULD BE CALLED TO TESTIFY AND WAS PREPARING ITS TESTIMONY. IN ADDITION THERE WOULD BE A BATTERY OF WITNESSES, BOTH AMERICAN AND KOREAN RESIDENTS, WHO WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY PROVIDE CONDEMNATORY EVIDENCE. HAHM SAID HE WILL BE SEEKING FRIENDLY WITNESSES TO ADVOCATE ROKG POSITION, BUT HE WAS NOT VERY OPTIMISTIC ON THE POSSIBILITIES. HE SAID HE HOPED TO MEET WITH DEPUTY SECRETARY INGERSOLL TO DISCUSS THE PROBLEM.
HABIB

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